

THE HAND OF GOD IN AMERICAN HISTORY.

A
SERMON

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Executive and Legislative Departments

OF THE

GOVERNMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS,

AT THE

ANNUAL ELECTION,

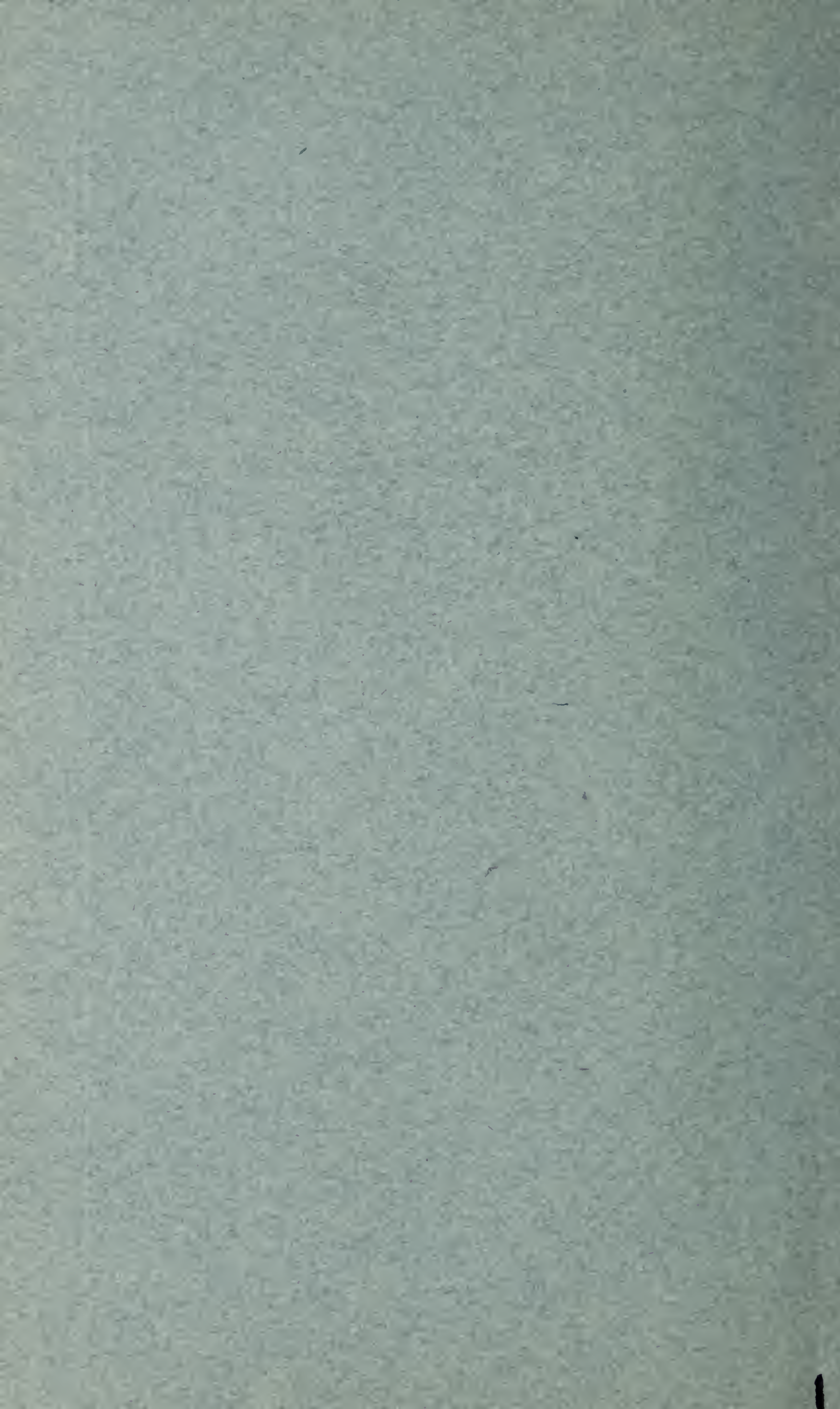
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5, 1876.

BY REV. S. W. FOLJAMBE.

BOSTON :

WRIGHT & POTTER, STATE PRINTERS,
79 MILK STREET (CORNER OF FEDERAL).

1876.



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, February 2, 1876.

Ordered, That a committee of three be appointed to present the thanks of the House to Rev. SAMUEL W. FOLJAMBE, of Malden, for his able and eloquent discourse before the executive and legislative branches of the government on January 5th, and to request a copy for publication.

GEO. A. MARDEN, *Clerk*.

Messrs. FOQUE of Malden, RICE of Danvers, and POPE of Somerville, were appointed.

MALDEN, February 29, 1876.

GENTLEMEN:—I have the honor to acknowledge the communication to me of the wishes of the House of Representatives, that a copy of the sermon which it was my privilege recently to deliver before the government of the Commonwealth, be given to the press. Having taken time to make the manuscript legible to the printer, it now gives me pleasure to comply with the request.

You will please accept my cordial acknowledgment of the courtesy with which the vote of your honorable body has been expressed to me, and believe me, with sentiments of high regard,

Your obedient servant,

SAMUEL W. FOLJAMBE.

Messrs. T. N. FOQUE, C. B. RICE, and C. G. POPE.



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 2, 1876.

Ordered, That one thousand copies of the sermon preached by the Rev. S. W. FOLJAMBE be printed under the direction of the Committee on Printing, for the use of the executive and legislative branches of the government.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 2, 1876.

Adopted under suspension of the rule requiring reference to Committee on Printing.

Sent up for concurrence in suspension of the rule.

GEO. A. MARDEN, *Clerk*.

SENATE, March 7, 1876.

Concurred.

S. N. GIFFORD, *Clerk*.

S E R M O N .

“THE LORD OUR GOD BE WITH US, AS HE WAS WITH OUR FATHERS : LET HIM NOT LEAVE US, NOR FORSAKE US.” 1 *Kings* viii. 57.

When St. Paul stood before that famous court, of which the poets and orators of Greece tell such proud things, he proclaimed to them the God they knew not, filling up the inscription to the unknown God with the name of Jehovah. He tells them more of God in a few minutes, than Plato had done in all his life. He brings the matter closely home to them, and makes them feel as if in contact with God; not with an ideal merely, but with a living, personal Being, whose providence is directed at once to the individual interests of men, and the highest interests of nations. “Seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things : and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation ; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they

might feel after him, and find him." Such is the divine basis of that institution which we call the State, and such the ultimate religious end of its existence. Not in force, nor in any mutual compact, nor yet in the family, does the State have its origin. The family and the State may seem to be more intimately related, but they are in fact totally distinct from each other. The State cannot be the natural product of the family, for it is animated by another kind of spirit. The family is the sphere of affection and custom, the State is the sphere of justice; the family is the product of nature, the State is not simply the product of nature, but is evolved under the action and control of Providence, and the tendency of its history, both as to its limitations and powers, is to lead it to God, who exercises that providence, and is the source of that spirit of justice which is its root and life.

The more thoroughly a nation deals with its history, the more decidedly will it recognize and own an overruling Providence therein, and the more religious a nation will it become; while the more superficially it deals with its history, seeing only secondary causes and human agencies, the more irreligious will it be. If the history of any

nation is the development of the latent possibilities existing in its special nature, it is also the record of a Divine Providence furnishing place and scope for that development, creating its opportunities, and guiding its progress. History is not a string of striking episodes, with no other connection but that of time. It is rather the working out of a mighty system, by means of regularly defined principles as old as creation, and as infallible as divine wisdom. With this truth in view, we approach our chosen theme,—

THE HAND OF GOD IN AMERICAN HISTORY.

Not inappropriate do we deem it, that we trace along the line of our history how God was with our fathers, and recall and reaffirm in this presence the truth of our increasing dependence upon him for the continued prosperity of our country and people.

1. Observe the hand of God in the wise and beneficent timing of events in the dawn of our history. The events of history are not accidents. There are no accidents in the lives of men or of nations. We may go back to the underlying cause of every event, and discover in each God's overruling and intervening wisdom. It has been

said that history is the biography of communities; in another, and profounder, sense, it is the autobiography of him "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," and who is graciously timing all events in the interests of his Christ, and of the kingdom of God on earth. Tracing the history of men, we find the most trivial and seemingly fortuitous things issuing beyond all human expectation or intention in the sublimest events; we see men planning and working with only their own more immediate and material interests in view, and yet a power behind them is noiselessly and effectually, though possibly for generations unobserved, overruling their action to the furtherance of higher, more widely extended, and more permanent purposes. Human freedom and human responsibility in bringing about either good or evil, are not to be pushed aside; providence is not fatalism; but, on the other hand, man's free activities do not prove the despotism of a blind chance, shifting as man's caprice may dictate. Neither social order, moral progress, nor a Christian civilization, can spring out of chance. These demand a prevision and adjustment of causes keener and mightier than man with his wisest forethought and highest

intelligence can exercise. There are influences which man can wield, and should control, aright; there are others which God alone originates and shapes. There are, again, other influences which are under human management, but which become mighty for good only by their timing; and this timing is sometimes a visible, but more frequently an invisible, interposition of God's overruling care, only truly seen after many generations have passed away. God's hand is seen in the starting, speeding, retarding, and matching such coincident and colliding influences as mark the progress and constitute the varied crises of history.

The discovery and preparation of this country to be the home of a great people,—the theatre of a new experiment in government, and the scene of an advancing Christian civilization,—is illustrative of this truth. Whatever may have been its prehistoric condition, for centuries it was concealed behind the mighty veil of waters from the eyes of the world. Not until the early part of the tenth century was it discovered by the Scandinavians, and only then to be hidden away again till the time should be ripe for its settlement, by a people providentially prepared for its occupancy. What a land it was, so magnificent

in extent, so varied in soil and climate, so unlimited in mineral wealth and vegetable bounties; while its conformation was such as to preclude its occupants from ever being other than an united people. Harbors, and rivers, and mountain ranges link as with iron bands the far separated localities. Yet all this thorough preparation by which this continent had been builded and furnished, was not available until God's hour had come for its occupancy.

Nor was this period reached without the concurrence of great moral and social events affecting the whole progress of society. The invention of movable type at Haarlem or Mentz, half a century before the discovery of America,—and only a few years previous to that invention, the manufacture of paper from linen rags, a most indispensable help to the development of the press,—had made books available to many, where manuscripts had been available to few. A few years later still came the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, which scattered the learning of the Greeks among the nations of the West. By these conspiring influences, knowledge became distributed, and a spirit of inquiry was everywhere awakened, broader and freer than was ever

known before. Then occurred the rediscovery of this continent, expanding the globe to the minds of the Old World, and stimulating a new spirit of enterprise and activity.

But neither the wonderful art of printing, nor the discovery of this transatlantic continent, had aroused with such mighty energy the mind of christendom, as did the discovery of a new world in theology by Luther, and the sudden reformation in religion which sprung up in Germany, and swiftly extended through Northern Europe. To an unreflecting mind, it would appear that the questions raised in this religious movement were purely theological, having no interest outside the Church. But this is not the case. If a man has the right to seek truth freely, he has the right to declare and communicate this truth; he has the right to associate himself with those who think as he does, and to assist them, and relieve their wants. A free Church, free education, free association, the right to speak and to write,—these are the consequences of the liberty of conscience proclaimed by the Reformers. Without knowing it, without desiring it, they brought about a revolution. The Reformation was the cause of a great forward movement in human affairs. It

awakened the intellect of mankind. Science, literature, invention, social life, political reform,—all were stimulated by it. These two events, therefore, the most important in modern times, are intimately connected in their bearing on American history. God timed the physical and the spiritual discovery to each other. The new life evoked would need a new and ampler field for its unhindered development. When he had created a stalwart race, and ordained them for the settlement of this country, and for laying the foundations of a higher civilization than the world had yet seen, and when they had started on their mission of light, and freedom, and religion, then he suddenly dropped the veil from this continent, and there arose before the astonished vision of the nations the splendors of the Western World.

Take, again, the century embracing the settlement of this country, and we discover the providential timing of influences shaping our national life and character. That century was a remarkable era, a period of wondrous activity and marvellous achievement, of strenuous struggles and lofty heroisms, of transcendent genius and bold enterprise. The roots of our national existence

strike down into no arid wastes of intellectual or political life. It was in a time when liberal thought was beginning to assert itself, when education was extending its influence, and when the mind, especially of Northern Europe, was full of intense stimulation. It was a period of abounding material enterprise, when inventions followed each other almost as rapidly, and with the same startling novelty, as in our own times. The telescope and the compound microscope,—the one opening up the boundlessness of God's empire, and the other revealing the delicate organism, the marvellous beauty, the infinite skill and care manifest in the minutest forms of creature life,—were the inventions of this age. Besides these, we have the mariner's compass, so improved as to become almost a new invention, the air-pump, the barometer, the thermometer; while among its discoveries were those of the circulation of the blood and the nature and use of electricity. It was the era of extended research and discovery. Its navigators and explorers traversed the globe in every meridian.

It was, moreover, a period of copious learning and of distinguished genius, both in literature and art, of discursive philosophy, profound piety,

and a sagacious statesmanship. Science was represented by Galileo, Tycho Brahé, and Kepler; art by Rubens, Vandyke, and Rembrandt; literature by Tasso, Cervantes, Molière, Racine, Edmund Spenser, Ben Jonson, and Beaumont; philosophy by Francis Bacon, John Selden, Philip Sidney, and Descartes; and theology by Isaac Casaubon, the immortal Hooker, and Blaise Pascal. It was in this century that Shakespeare, the myriad-minded man, the greatest intellect who in our recorded world has left record of himself in literature, the poet of the human race, lived and wrote. It was now the strain of Milton's song was heard. Great men like these are both the ripe fruit and the creators of their times. The times could not be without them, nor are they independent of them. They are God's gift to the world, and in their thought and work indicate the world's progress, and are its means and helpers.

It was, further, a century of startling incident and wonderful vicissitude, both in the ecclesiastical and political world. We are apt to suppose that progress and innovation are so peculiarly the features of these latter times, that it is only in them that a man of more than ordinary length

of life has witnessed any remarkable change. But the period we are now considering is quite as varied in the changes presented as any other age of the world. It included the magnificent reign of Elizabeth, the great English rebellion, the ten years of the Commonwealth, and the restoration of the crown. It saw the forty years' reign of Philip II., the amazing revolt of the Netherlands, and the final establishment of a Protestant republic. It witnessed the struggles of the Huguenots in France, including the horrors of St. Bartholomew's, and saw the establishment of the inquisition in Holland, persecutions by which Rome lost more than Protestants. It included in its wonderful annals the Thirty Years' War, with the sorrow and sacrifice it involved, and the remarkable energy and heroism it developed.

Such, in brief, are some of the leading features of the remarkable century out of which the earlier settlers of this continent came. These men could not fail to feel the influence of the times which, in the expressive language of the Old Testament, were going over them. While these times were partly of the earth, they were in very much of their bearing above the earth. In them God was evoking and guiding energies,

awakening and developing moral forces, and working out results, which were to affect the whole race. They were the dawn of a new era, the beginning of a new life; and the men whom they produced brought with them to this new world the indomitable energy, the restless activity, the independent thought, and the power of achievement which so distinctly characterized the new era. They were plain, unassuming men, bringing with them little wealth, and unattended by the pomp of circumstance. They attracted little attention at the time. Indeed, they were guided by him, whose promise was that he would lead the blind by a way they know not. They saw not the vastness of the foundations they were laying. The founders of this country were truly great in their unconsciousness. But taking hold of the work immediately at hand, they proved themselves to be men knowing the times, and God was with them. Such being the providential springs of our national existence, observe—

2. The hand of God in the development of our national life. Neither nations, governments, nor yet religion itself, are sudden creations. All governments are experimental. They are growths. God simply gives us the seeds of things, and

then, under the action of his truth and spirit, and the leadings of his providence, we are to see to their planting and growth. The Reformation, with the social impulse to which it had given birth, was destined to advance a second step, appearing in a purer form, but on a different soil. To escape from religious intolerance, a body of English dissenters, contemptuously called Puritans, were seen flying, first to Holland, then to these American shores. Thus exiled and escaping, God watched and guided their flight. Through these men he intended to realize, in the form of permanent institutions, the ideas of religion and government which the majority of mankind but imperfectly understood, which they were poorly prepared to appreciate, and were little disposed to promote, but which, being essential to the best interests of mankind, were wrapt up in the divine purpose.

In the men selected for this work, we find, as aforetime, that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many noble, not many mighty are called." God works by the lowliest agencies, in accomplishing his purposes. The human instrumentality is graciously adapted to its service, but never permitted to hide the hand that uses

it. We are prone to exalt the human instrument, to heighten that which is common, and to magnify the characters and deeds of men to whom we apparently owe so much. Far be it from me, in this hour, to detract from the glory of our ancestry. But we often make unfavorable and desponding contrasts between the men of the past and present generations, forgetting that of these earlier public men, the larger portion are already forgotten, with their faults, as well as their virtues, while those whose memories remain to us are more or less idealized. Their human side is only indistinctly seen, while their genius and virtues are alone immortal. The men who came to these American shores, bringing the inspiration and impulse of the new life which had appeared in Europe, were a plain, common people. They were hard-working, Bible-reading, profoundly in earnest, with a deep sense of God in them; but they were not so colossal, nor so perfect, as our imagination so often paints them. They needed the schooling of the times and of Providence, as we all do, that they might not drop into the old ruts, and perpetuate the evils of the old religious and political life. It is evident that a double purpose animated them. They

were not unmindful, in seeking this new home, of worldly advantage. They were impelled by a spirit of material enterprise, and were far from willing to settle down to any idle, dreamy existence. At the same time, a deep religious conviction swayed their minds, and a profound religious purpose shaped their lives. It was not a love of man, but a love of God,—not a love of country, but a love of Christ, overmastering and crucifying all love of country, a personal consecration to the gospel superior to all philanthropy, to all patriotism,—that planted the germs of our national life on Plymouth Rock and Jamestown. Governed and impelled by this twofold spirit, strong in God and their own heroic patience, they commenced their battle with danger and hardship. Stepping forth upon the shore, a wild and frowning wilderness received them. Disease smote them, but they fainted not; famine overtook them, but they feasted on roots with a patient spirit. They built a house for God, then for themselves. They established education and the observance of a stern but august morality, then legislated for the smaller purposes of material interests. Thus did they lay the foundations. Soon the villages began to smile. Churches

arose still farther in the depths of the wilderness. Industry multiplied her hands. Colleges were founded, and the beginning of civil order were witnessed. A decade of years passed,—Salem, Charlestown, Dorchester, Roxbury, Watertown, Cambridge, and Boston are settled,—trade is opened with the Mother Country, and the foundations of a permanent colony are laid. This colonial period was full of indomitable energy, of a busy enterprise, of advancing learning, of abounding religious and political activity. The population increased with a startling rapidity. Commerce, says Mr. Burke, extended itself “out of all proportion beyond the numbers of the people,” and already the Old World began to be fed by the New; while the love of freedom deepened in the hearts of the people, and became the predominant feature distinguishing the whole body. Two things impress us, as marking the history of this period.

(a.) The earnest struggles of religious freedom. It was as yet only imperfectly that some of the principles which began to be evolved in Luther’s day had been wrought out. Much was gained for religious liberty when that Reformer broke with the traditional dogmatism of the Papal

Church. Still more was gained when the Puritans broke with the churchly authority which they left behind them. But there was needed another break, and it was one with themselves. In the early settlement of our country, Church and State were united by law. The Church was sustained by taxation and state appropriation. In the Southern States, formal church establishments existed. In all, there existed religious tests, excluding from public office or civil franchise such as did not accept the accredited faith. While in Connecticut and Massachusetts there was no religious establishment as such,—the bare suggestion of one having drawn forth an energetic protest,—yet a forced conformity to, and support of, the congregational church system was manifestly the policy of the founders. The Pilgrims came hither to enjoy their own religious opinions, but with no idea of establishing universal liberty of conscience and worship. John Robinson repudiated any such right as strongly as John Knox. He defended stoutly “the power of the civil magistrate to punish civilly religious actions, by compulsion to repress public and notable idolatry, as also to provide that the truth of God in his ordinances be taught and published, and by some penalty to provoke his subjects

universally unto hearing, for their instruction and conversion; yea, to inflict the same upon them, if, after due teaching, they offered not themselves to the Church." This was not the soil, however, to receive such doctrine. Resistance soon sprang up. A new advance was to be made; but, like all true reform, it is to be through persecution and trial. There is to be another break from authority and religious intolerance. The leader in this new movement was forthcoming. A man of noble type, of conscientious firmness, of heroic spirit, of singular magnanimity, and, though not without his defects, a man of remarkable breadth and vigor of moral and intellectual character, in many respects entitled to stand as the foremost man of his times. The statement of Mr. Bancroft, that Roger Williams was the first in modern christendom to assert, in its plenitude, the doctrine of liberty of conscience, the equality of opinions before the law, and that in "its defence he was the harbinger of Milton, and the precursor and superior of Jeremy Taylor," has been often quoted, and may seem over-generous, since others, like Knowles and Penn, were engaged in a like movement. But really, in the order of time, he preceded all others in the advocacy and establishment of soul liberty.

Rhode Island, Maryland, and Pennsylvania were the first civil communities that ever incorporated religious liberty into their original constitutions, since which time the world has been led to admit the wisdom and sound policy of such a course. And as the principle has gained ascendancy over the land, it has been proven that freedom of opinion is not inimical to religious growth, and that a free Church and a free State are a people's grandest opportunity for religious and political development.

(b.) A second feature of this period, is, the almost spontaneous growth of representative governments. Without any concerted action on the part of the Colonies, but, as it were, by a popular instinct, which lay at the foundation of that constitutional freedom which the fathers sought in this country, "a House of Burgesses," says Mr. Hutchinson, "broke out in Virginia, in 1620; and although there was no color for it in the charter of Massachusetts, a House of Deputies appeared suddenly in 1643." Various acts of interference were attempted to check this tendency to independent self-government, but all in vain, and only to develop that spirit of resistance which afterward broke out in the Revolution. The attempt of

Charles I. to check the progress of liberty in the New World, by demanding the surrender of the charter of Massachusetts and the appointment of royal commissioners for the Colonies, were looked upon as an invasion of popular rights, and provoked an earnest and successful resistance. We notice the growth of this feeling, when, during the second Charles, the towns and churches throughout the country were resolved to oppose the coming of a royal governor; and Stuyvesant sent word to the Mother Country that the colony of Boston remained constant to its old maxims of a free State, dependent upon none but God. In 1701, the Lords of Trade declared that "the independence that the Colonies were thirsting for was notorious." Four years later, it was announced in Parliament that "the Colonies would, in process of time, cast off their allegiance to England, and set up a government of their own." Thus a permanent free State was the structure, the foundations of which they were in a measure unconsciously laying. Says Machiavelli, "It must be laid down as a general rule, that it very seldom, or never, happens that any government is either well founded at first, or thoroughly reformed afterwards, except the plan be laid and conducted by one man only." But

certainly this was not the case with ours. The people formed its own commonwealths,—its ultimate nation. "The people," says Mr. Bancroft, "was superior to its institutions, possessing the vital force which goes before organization, and gives to it strength and form." Under the action of this vital force the principle of self-government was nurtured, and for the space of one hundred and fifty years the work went on quietly, almost imperceptibly, until there appeared before the statesmen of the Old World a new claimant for national recognition and honors. Surely the eye that can see no indication of a Divine Providence working in such historical development, is one which, though it may discern the face of the sky, cannot discern the signs of the times.

3. Passing now from the infancy of the nation to the revolutionary period of our history, when it reached its manhood, we find added illustration of God's hand in that history. The Revolution was not the result of any causes or of any spirit that had suddenly arisen. It was the necessary consequence of the previous providential training,—of the moral and political forces which had long been at work in the minds of the people. Edmund Burke's analysis of the probable causes of the

Revolution, given in his masterly speech on "Conciliation with the Colonies," is at once just and philosophical. A love of freedom he recognized as the distinguishing characteristic of the whole people. As the descendants of Englishmen, they were "not only devoted to liberty, but to liberty according to English ideas," and so were fundamentally opposed, with all the force of immemorial tradition, to taxation without representation. Their popular form of government, through provincial assemblies, tended to nourish their love of liberty; while, in their education and religion,—which latter he defines as "a refinement on the principle of resistance, the dissidence of dissent, and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion,"—he saw reasons why they might be conciliated, but not coerced. But another policy than that which his sagacious statesmanship recommended, was pursued, and the contest was forced upon the people. It must have come sooner or later; but the attempt to deprive the Colonies of their representative system hastened the event. The passage of the Stamp Act and the Port Bill fell upon the minds of a spirited and jealous people as an act of oppression to be resisted. The presence of bodies of armed men, instead of producing the

designed intimidation, only served to arouse the spirit of the people, and cement the Colonies in a common bond, for mutual support and protection. I need not stop to rehearse the story of the uprising and struggles of an earnest and enlightened people for independence. Already the story of Lexington and Concord, of Cambridge and Breed's Hill, and many other renowned scenes, has been told in words of eloquence and poetry, and the heroism and piety of the fathers have been reproduced for our admiring gratitude, and the stimulation of our patriotic spirit and pride.

But, in looking over this heroic past, I see the hand of God; and this, not only in the shaping of events and directing of influences, likely to serve as motives in the minds of men, but in the unity of the people, and the unparalleled devotion of the various Colonies,—scattered as they were over a large extent of territory, and bound together, not so much by a common material interest, as by a common and all-pervading sentiment of freedom. I see that hand in the men raised up for the times. He who makes the times go over us, has always the men ready to meet them. It was so in the era of the Reformation. When the church, slumbering in her degeneracy, needed a reawakening, he

found a Luther, a Zwingli, a Wickliffe, a Huss,—men of nerve, not faultless, but men of keen mental power and comprehensive grasp, who knew how to seize the truth and do the work of their day. It was so in the times of political reform and religious liberty in England. When the religious idea was to be wrought into the national constitution, and the liberties of mankind were to be placed on their only true and permanent basis, he raised up men like Hampden, and Milton, and Cromwell. So, for the times of Republican progress,—when a new nation is to come to its manhood, and new institutions are to be confirmed and established,—he found an Otis and a Henry, the impassioned and triumphant defenders of popular rights; a Samuel and a John Adams, the one with his profound sagacity and untiring courage, the other acute and impassioned; a Thomas Jefferson and George Mason, both sagacious and learned; a Benjamin Franklin, astute and philosophical; a Josiah Quincy, Jr., well styled “the silver-tongued orator of freedom”; a Robert Morris, who, as the skilful financier, rendered services which, though differing in form, were hardly less needful to the success of the cause than those of Washington himself, who stands peerless among the great and

good of all ages. In a most emphatic sense, Washington was a man prepared by Providence for a special end. In the long and dreary war, commencing in the spring of 1775, and which was not closed for seven years, what was wanting was a permanent military chieftain, who should be possessed of the rare qualities of patience, perseverance and endurance; and all these qualities Washington had in so very high a degree, that it may be said with entire truth, that there never was his superior in such endowments. Calm, wise, incorruptible, he was preëminently the man for the times.

I see, further, the hand of God in his unmistakable help in the hour of conflict. We attained our national independence against all probabilities. Often, in the dark hours of the struggle, nothing saved the American cause from entire destruction but the divine interposition. It had its days of darkness, suffering, and reverses, when it seemed as if success were impossible. A country without resources, an army gathered on short enlistments, and without discipline, a Congress sometimes tardy in supplying the means of carrying on the war, were not the most encouraging conditions of success. It is matter of astonishment, that the spirit

of the great leader did not break down, and that the internal supports of his hope and courage did not give way. But for the firm hold he had upon first and highest principles, and the confidence that he felt in God as their defender, his spirit must have sunk within him long before the close of the war. Whether he himself recognized a Divine Providence as working in the American cause; whether he regarded his country's success as dependent upon that Providence, he would have told you, had you asked him, as he came from his knees in the forest seclusion, where he was accustomed to bow in prayer, while passing that dark winter at Valley Forge. God was as certainly in the lives of Washington, and Lafayette, and Marion, as he was in the lives of Moses, and Joshua, and Daniel; he was no more present at Megiddo and Jericho, than at White Plains and Valley Forge. The battle was the Lord's, and it could not be lost.

4. In the growth and progress of the intervening century, we discover the guiding and beneficent hand of God. The struggles of the Revolution past, the boon of independence won, a new epoch was to be entered upon, and it was one of vast moment. Failing here, all that had gone be-

fore would go for nothing. It was not enough that the country should become free from the domination of England: it was necessary that it should be erected into a nation, and that the numerous Colonies that had been converted into States should be formed into one Republic. This was a solemn hour in our history. The American cause needed men of far-sighted sagacity, of able statesmanship; it needed men of incorruptible patriotism, who would fill the offices of government, not in the interest of self, but of their country,—faithful at home, and just abroad. How adequately God furnished the men, and overruled all things in the interests of the nation, the history of the constitutional era shows.

July 21, 1775, Franklin, who twenty years before had reported at Albany a plan for the union of the Provinces, submitted an outline for confederating the Colonies into one nation. His plan was a declaration of independence, and an effective system of a self-perpetuating republic, and contained the two great elements of American political life,—the domestic power of the several States, and the limited sovereignty of the central government. His proposition was, however, for the time, put aside. Two years later, certain articles of

confederation were adopted, forming, during the progress of the war, all the constitutional government that was requisite. The war being closed, the new condition of the country demanded a greater centralization of power, and a more efficient method of governmental action. The old articles of confederation were thrown aside, and our present Constitution, originally framed by Gouverneur Morris, was submitted to the Continental Congress in 1787, and copies were sent to the several States for ratification. Coming in contact with extreme doctrines of state sovereignty, it was violently opposed. There were needed minds who could vindicate and support it. Such men as Madison, Hamilton, and Jay meet the crisis. The result of their efforts was put forth in the "Federalist," consisting of a series of political papers, so fundamental in their principles, so clear in their reasoning, and so masterly in their conception, that European statesmen have acknowledged their extraordinary value. To these men and their writings, the country is indebted, under God, in no small degree, for the ratification of the Constitution by the people of the several States,—a Constitution which, in its general features, might be the glory of any people; which guarantees

protection to every man, woman, and child, irrespective of origin, race, or religion; which adjusts itself readily to the exigencies of a heterogeneous population, spreading over an immense continent; which summarily and forever disposes of the vexed question of the relations of Church and State; and which provides for its own amendment by legal process,—a Constitution embodying the expressed preferences of the people, with not a place in it for arbitrary power to hurt the hair of the head of the humblest citizen, and binding the people of the several States together in a union as indissoluble as it is gentle and beneficent.

The Constitution ratified, the offices of the executive were to be filled, and the men fitted for them were not wanting, as the first constitutional cabinet shows. The national credit was sunk to its lowest depths, borne down by the millstone of a ponderous debt. Alexander Hamilton was called to the task of raising it. A national judiciary was to be appointed, and that clear-minded jurist, John Jay, came to the bench as the first chief justice. Our youthful Republic had been, and was to be, represented in the courts of the Old World, and there were such men as Franklin, Jefferson, Pinckney, Livingston, and Adams, with others of like char-

acter, to do it. While we may not affirm that demagogism has had no part in our national affairs, nor that political corruption has never appeared in the tactics of partyism, yet, so far, our American Congress has never been without men whose abilities have dignified its councils, and whose patriotism has prompted them to guard the national honor, and see that the Republic should receive no harm. Under their successive leadership, the institutions of our country grew and strengthened themselves. Our material statistics soon dazzled the world. Europe gazed, no longer to sneer, but in wonder to wait and watch what the issue might be. Our population doubled every fifteen years, and our wealth every ten years. Our farms became the granary of other lands. Our commerce grew until American sails whitened every harbor of the world. Our cotton-fields were making England rich. Our busy enterprise was sweeping the continent, advancing beyond the Alleghanies, seizing and settling the prairies of the West, and still braving the wilderness, reached onward to the Rocky Mountains. To the great body of the people, the government was felt to be a hand of protection and blessing; while this youngest among the nations was exerting a salutary influence on

the social and political movements of the civilized world.

But there was one evil that tarnished the glory of our national life, and threatened its existence. African bondage was the enigma alike of our home and foreign policy; of our diplomacy and of our ethics. Our fathers regarded it as a thing to be regretted, but supposed it exceptional, and hoped it would prove ephemeral. By a studied circumlocution, they avoided the explicit recognition of it in the Constitution; yet it had there, by implication, its designed safe-guards,—shelved and curtained for, as it was hoped, a slow and quiet, but sure decay. Some, more far-sighted, feared the result of the compromise. Jefferson and Madison uttered words of warning, still hoping for the best. Time passed on; but instead of its diminution and decay, there was an increase of the evil, until it precipitated upon the country the bloodshed and horrors of the civil war.

The anti-slavery struggle in our country must ever stand alone in history with the noble men it made, the loftiness of personal character it revealed, the moral forces it evoked, the profound moral convictions, sublime devotion, self-sacrifice and moral heroism it developed, as also

those religious and political revolutions to which it led. It was one of the marked providential epochs in our history. In no period of that history is the leading hand or the inspiring wisdom of God more strikingly manifest. The final catastrophe which led to the overthrow of the monstrous iniquity was involved in the elements that had wrought in our history from the landing of the Pilgrims and Cavaliers. Nor can we separate our last war from the first. Dissimilar in the scale of their operations, in the tramp of mustered hosts, and still more so in the ideas involved, yet, in the relation of cause and effect, the first was the natural precursor and herald of the other. The first was for national independence, the second was to make the Republic one and indivisible, on the indestructible foundations of liberty and equality. The second was to redeem the promise of the first, and to uphold the pledges and the promises of the Declaration of Independence. Long and trying was the work of purification and redemption. An evil so subtly wrought into the social and political structure, was not to be so easily overthrown. But God gave us the men for the hour and its work. Nor did the War of Independence raise up

grander men, the Father of his Country excepted, than were raised up for this moral war for universal freedom. Recall their names and memory: John Quincy Adams, the martyr Lovejoy, Charles G. Torrey, Gerritt Smith, and Arthur Tappan, who was ready to sell his wares, but not his principles; James S. Birney, first presidential candidate of the old liberty party; Salmon P. Chase and Benjamin Wade, Secretary Seward and Charles Sumner, Governor Andrew and the martyr President, Abraham Lincoln, preserver of his country, as Washington was its father, and the equal of any of them in moral worth and sturdy work; the historian of the contest, as he was also one of its principal figures, Henry Wilson, the incorruptible statesman and the true Christian philanthropist. These, with many others, some still living, were men worthy any age and any land. Men were they of the thoroughly Puritan type. Not ambition, not revenge, not a spirit of fanaticism, nor of a blind unreasoning enthusiasm, but stern, uncompromising moral convictions, an unconquerable love of justice and of liberty, wrought in their whole character and shaped their lives. They were men full of the martyr qualities. Their lofty courage never was surpassed.

The hiding of their power was in God. In the earlier phase of the contest in Congress, over the right of petition, "the old man eloquent," who had come down from the presidential chair to serve the people as their faithful tribune, was daily threatened by the same class of assassins who afterwards assaulted our noble Sumner, and when asked by a sympathizing Quakeress as to the source of his strength, his reply was, it was gotten of God. What was true of Adams was substantially true of each of the leaders and actors in this great conflict. They drew their inspiration from the Everlasting Hills, up to which they daily lifted their eyes. Indeed, one fact is specially noteworthy here: as the contest put on proportions beyond the measure of human wisdom to guide, or human power to control, our martyr President found support in his own and the people's prayers, for the nation was then glad to recognize God as its trust, and flee to him for help.

Nor was the trust or appeal in vain. Long and severe was the final contest; but according to His promise whose word was never broken, the work of righteousness was peace. The moment every bond was broken Heaven smiled, we

won the sympathy of the world, and victory perched upon our banners. Premature rejoicings were heard across the sea, that Republican institutions had failed, signally and disastrously. So far from this, through an overruling Providence, they have drawn lustre from the reproach and strength from the trial which the short-sightedness of their founders entailed upon them. The people proved that they were inspired with the energy of an indestructible life, by their uprising in the majesty of an undivided conviction, concentrated power and determined purpose; by their unrepining submission to suffering and privation; by their sublime patience under strange defeats and wearying delays, and by their heroism in the field of battle. For it was no hireling soldiery fought our battle of freedom, but the people themselves, among whom were not less than one hundred and fifty-nine thousand in both army and navy of our own brothers and sons, twelve thousand nine hundred of whom sleep in a soldier's honored grave. More was done through this sharp blast of adversity to confirm faith in our institutions than could have been accomplished under any other circumstances. Besides, by this very episode in our history, the difference has

been made palpable between revolutions which are prompted by that which is merely local and sectional, and by a purpose to extend and perpetuate an acknowledged evil, instead of removing it, and such a revolution as we have during these later months been commemorating,—a revolution that aimed only at the redress of wrongs and the increase of human happiness.

Looking, now, at our present standing as a nation, we have every reason to recognize and own the hand of our God. The future chronicler of events, as he looks down on the unrolled scroll of time, will write down the period in which we live as part of the marvellous century in human story. The interest in history deepens as time advances, for it becomes more and more the record of intellectual and moral progress, of the advancing liberty and happiness of mankind. This is preëminently so with our history. It is the story of a wonderful growth. It is in no spirit of empty boasting or vain-glory I speak of what we are, and what we enjoy as a people; for not by the might of our power, or the wisdom of our counsel, has this nation been built, or its resources developed. Has there been wisdom in our counsels? It was by the inspiration of the Almighty.

Has wealth increased? God gave us power to get wealth. Has freedom gained new victories? He led us in the ways of righteousness for his own name's sake. "He hath not dealt so with any nation."

Consider the growth of the country thus divinely ushered into existence and organized under the Constitution into a nation. The thirteen Colonies that accomplished the Revolution have multiplied into thirty-seven independent States, a single one of them exceeding in population the original thirteen. The narrow border settlement along the coast, fenced in by France and the native tribes, has expanded to the dimensions of a continent. Arizona, Colorado, Dakota, Indian Territory, Montana, New Mexico, Washington,—territories equal to the great monarchies of Europe,—with four smaller ones, have been added to the Union; and the two millions and a half of population which fired the imagination of Burke have swollen to the number of forty millions. Then, our country was one of the poorest of the world; now, its resources are characterized by an English statistical work as enormous. Within this wide domain there has been developed an almost incredible mineral wealth. Of coal, our production was

small; now, millions of tons are mined annually. Of iron, which formed scarcely an appreciable part of our productions half a century ago, we now produce more than the world consumed at the beginning of our national existence, while the development of gold and silver mines has not only been remarkable, but has had a great influence on the business of all commercial nations. At the time of the Revolution, manufactories were few in number; in 1870 more than two million persons were employed in the various manufacturing pursuits, producing more than two thousand one hundred millions of products. Our mercantile marine is larger than that of any other nation save Great Britain. In 1874, we imported goods to the value of five hundred and sixty-seven millions, while our exports were five hundred and eighty-six millions. In the same year we exported seventy-one million bushels of wheat, which was less than one-fourth of the whole amount raised in the country. The total amount of all agricultural products for the year was two thousand four hundred and forty-eight millions. But this is not all; as if to facilitate our efforts in subduing and utilizing our extending domain, and advancing these mighty material interests, mark how our

Heavenly Father has timed the period of this growth. It is since we came into birth as a nation that the three great modern elements of human progress have been developed. Steam has become our steed, and lightning our messenger, and gold the magician that has set them to work.

But better than all outward and material progress have been the firm rooting and beneficent growth of our religious and political institutions. By the blessing of God, we have been enabled to show that popular government, in the pithy language of Mr. Lincoln, "a government of the people, by the people, and for the people," is not only a possibility, but has in it the elements of enduring strength and progress. Severely has this principle been tried, and most triumphantly has it stood the test. We have accomplished the separation of Church and State, without any serious detriment to either; nay, with positive advantage to both. The State has not ceased to be Christian because freed from all responsibility as to religious opinions and institutions. It originated in the Christian religion, and will continue to be conserved by it. Mr. Everett declares that "all the distinctive features and superiority of our Republican institutions

are derived from the teachings of Scripture.” Rufus Choate affirms “our nationality is, to an extraordinary degree, not a growth, but a production. It had its origin in the will and reason, and so depends upon the will and reason for its preservation.” We do not object to this statement, only we would affirm that it was a changed, Christianized, regenerated will and reason which constructed our nationality, and that the will and reason which would preserve it must be purely and practically Christian. I care not for any formal constitutional recognition of Christianity; indeed, the fact complained of in some quarters, that there is no such recognition in the Constitution, is, to my mind, proof of the purity of the religious spirit of its framers. The separation of State and Religion was the testimony of the fathers to the inherent power of the Christian faith, and that it had no need of any political bolstering up. But all this was far from ignoring the religious spirit in our national life; its guiding and impelling power in the lives of our people, and its formative influence in all their institutions and laws. If ever there has been a people who incorporated the Bible into themselves, and themselves into the Bible,—whose laws, cus-

toms, institutions and literature were permeated by the spirit of Christianity,—it has been our own, and this while the Constitution expressly provides that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion. According to some, it would be made to appear as though there had been a decrease of religious growth, and a decadence of religious strength, proportionately with the progress of the country. But figures most clearly show the enormous growth of American Christianity, as a whole, and that it has more than kept pace with the rapid strides of population. From a careful estimate, it would appear that the whole number of religious organizations existing in the country at the beginning of the Revolution, was less than nineteen hundred and fifty. The total population was then estimated at three and a half millions, which would show a church for every seventeen hundred souls. By the last census, the total number of church organizations is given as more than seventy-two thousand, which, in a population of thirty-eight millions, would show a church for every five hundred and twenty-nine. In other words, while the population has multiplied eleven-fold, the churches have multiplied thirty-seven-

fold. We have no means of subjecting the aggregate value of church property to the same test; but, according to the recent presidential message, the untaxable church property of the country, in 1850, amounted to eighty-three millions, which amount had doubled in 1860, while, in 1875, he places it at one thousand millions. Of course, such statistics as these are unsatisfactory tests of the real growth of religion, yet must we depend, more or less, on statistics as our only means of reaching general conclusions; and much as we hear of the decay of faith and the growth of the spirit of indifference, it seems certain, from such a review, that the positive institutions of religion have not, during the last hundred years, lost their hold on the mass of the American people.

Next to the growth of our religious institutions, is the development of the educational interests of our country. The founders of this government were so sagacious, as to see that the permanence of free institutions depended on the intelligence of the people; and it has been shown, by our experiment, that free institutions can give a wider education to the people, than has ever been given by an aristocracy or a monarchy.

The student of American education may well be gratified by the wide-spread diffusion of intelligence throughout our country, and by the readiness with which the people, especially of the North and West, have been willing to tax themselves for the support of common schools, and by the munificent contributions from private sources for the purposes of higher education. He may rejoice in the testimony of observing foreigners, that the people of this land, if not the most highly educated, are the most generally educated in the world. A recent French writer asserts that, in the United States, popular instruction comes nearest to its ideal. But much as has been done, we are still in the midst of the educational problem. Two things we have accomplished. We have proven that we can have education without sectarian schools, and have been able to make education universal, by thus making it secular, and then free. But much remains to be done in the development and enforcement of methods. Of the fourteen millions of our reported school population, only eight millions are actually enrolled, and of these, not more than five millions are in anything like regular attendance. The questions assuming im-

portance in our times are, How are we to maintain and perpetuate such a government as ours without intelligent electors? Can we depend on intelligence without moral direction, or secure a perfect moral direction without a religious basis? The sovereign should be intelligent. The people are sovereigns, with questions of constantly increasing moment to decide. There must, then, be a general average intelligence. There is but one conclusion: the State must educate its children, if it would preserve itself from harm; it owes a duty to itself. It is true the world will never outgrow the necessity of leaders. There never can arise any conditions of society when men of original thought, of deep mental forecast, and high scholarly attainment will not be needed to lead the advance of the race. Indeed, what our country needs at this moment, is, that its wise and cultured men, its men of sterling character and worth, no longer abstain from an active participation in public affairs, and that our people recognize their need of such men in the management of public interests. But a few thinkers and scholars, sandwiched in between the great unkempt and ignorant mass of electors, can never save the nation, or conserve its true progress.

Intelligence, however, is not alone indispensable. Knowledge is power, but it may be power for evil as much as good; it has no moral quality in itself. The greatest danger of the Republic is its educated, experienced, cultivated, corrupt demagogues. Intelligence without religion is a dangerous pilot for the ship of state. Eliminate that element; take religious thought, sentiment, and aspiration from the atmosphere of our education, and men will soon become animalized, and this government sink beneath the green pool of its own corruption. It was an instinct of self-preservation that incorporated in the Bill of Rights that "religion, morality, and knowledge are necessary to good government." It is our unsectarian, popular education,—but an education as yet undivorced from the religious sentiment and spirit,—that has been the source and means of all our progress in the past, and must continue to be our defence and hope in all the future. Daniel Webster most suggestively said, "In what age, by what sect, where, when, and by whom, has religious truth been excluded from education? Nowhere! Never! Everywhere, and at all times, it has been regarded as essential. It is the essence, the vitality of useful instruction." We

have reached an important point in our history. Not as yet is the experiment of self-government complete. We stand in the presence of a commanding past,—a past graciously secured to us. Come what may, the records of our Washington and Hamilton, our Adams and Henry, our Jefferson and Franklin, our Jay and Marshall, our Madison and Jackson, our Webster and Clay, our Lincoln, and Sumner, and Wilson, cannot be torn from the world's annals. Freedom, education, growing territory, commerce, invention, wealth,—how largely have they been given us! But standing with this commanding past in retrospect, we turn to confront a solemn future. "As to America," said Lord Macaulay, "I appeal to the twentieth century." We enter upon our second century amid deepening responsibilities. No thoughtful man can close his eyes to the dangers which beset us, or be unmindful of the new issues constantly arising, demanding for their wise solution the most unselfish and the purest patriotism with the most enlightened Christian conscientiousness.

We need, in view of our dangers, to temper our enthusiasm with sobriety. We are menaced by a growing spirit of materialism. The eagerness of

men after material prosperity tends to a practical absorption in those ends. Thus we have the greed, the excitement, the infatuation, the extravagance, and the corruption, that, to so great an extent, characterize our times. The abounding iniquity of our day is a just cause of alarm. While we ought not to forget nor undervalue much that is noble, and true, and good, in the present time, nor regard the former days as in all respects better than these, we must admit that we are living in a period of shameful prevalent corruption and crime. Each daily paper brings its fresh instalment of defalcation, fraudulent dealing, forgery, robbery, and murder. On every hand men are making void the law of God. While there is an advance of truth and religion on the one hand, there is a strengthening of the bands of wickedness, and a breaking away from the restraints of law. Intemperance is still sending its more than one hundred thousand victims annually in this country to a drunkard's grave and a drunkard's doom, wasting millions of treasure, and increasing pauperism and crime. No true patriot can be found who can look with anything but a feeling of sadness on such a condition of things, nor without earnestly desiring that the most thorough and stringent

measures be employed for the decrease of immorality and crime, and the increase of human virtue. Certainly it is no time for breaking down the fences of law and religion, but for their firmer building and completer preservation. It is true you cannot legislate evil out of the world, but by an impartial, rigorous justice you can make it too costly for practice, and by a wise and Christian legislation you may limit its reach and remove its temptations; and for this, in its most perfect measure, and to our utmost ability, the God of righteousness holds every man responsible. But, alas! not the least evil of our times is the increasing corruption in the officers of government, both national and local. Scarcely a week passes that we are not shamed by the greed and faithlessness of some one in high position. If to-day there be reason for any concern, it is not so much because of any loss of hereditary talent, or eloquence, or shrewd intelligence, but because of the decay, in too many places, of the old ancestral integrity, disinterestedness, and magnanimity. What our country needs in its leaders and legislators are the purest Christian principles, the loftiest personal character, the highest and most unselfish political aims; that they be men whom no gold can buy, no

adulation of the people can mislead, and no spirit of ambition can pervert. Such men as these, as our history proves, and as the scenes of the past few weeks illustrate,—as a weeping nation has united in honoring the name and reverencing the virtues of a man having, it may be, little gracefulness of speech or bearing, but with a great talent for serving his generation and doing hard work for the public good; a man honestly ambitious; whose industry was such as to raise him to the second office in the land without one dishonest act; one at heart sound and true; the lover of his kind, “who feared God and eschewed evil,”—such men the people will honor and enshrine in their most grateful remembrance and affection.

In referring to the evils of our times, we have not spoken despondently; for there is no evil which a true Christian fidelity, and a wise and sagacious patriotism, and a pure political action, cannot lessen or remove. If, in the present season of difficulty and depression, any mind has yielded to despondency as to our future, it needs only to be remembered, as a check to this hasty despair, how much of misrule and mischief every great nation has had to survive. There never has been an auspicious day for humanity that was not one of

doubt and conflict. Great evils have always confronted the world's earnest workers. Indeed, the intense light that they have flashed on them, has tended to reveal them with greater clearness. The world does not move backward, neither is it stationary. Men may leave their work incomplete, but the work of God goes on to perfection. What trials of our faith in principles, what delays, nay, even what momentary reverses may be before us, none may foresee; but our trust is in God, whose purposes never fail. Generations may come and go individuals may die, the great and the mighty, men wise in council and reverend in goodness, may pass away, but God's work in the regeneration of the race will go on. There will be vicissitude and change, the conflict between good and evil will deepen, the questions engrossing the thought of to-day will find their solution, and give place to the more absorbing questions of the future; but the country will live, its institutions perfected and perpetuated by the enlightened devotion and patriotism of the people, till our letters and our arts, our schools and our churches, our laws and our liberties, shall be carried from the arctic circle to the tropics, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof.

May it please Your Excellency, Governor of Massachusetts, Your Honor, Lieutenant-Governor, the Honorable Council, the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives, to receive our respectful salutations. You have the right to regard it as a distinction and a privilege that you have been called to serve the State in this historic period. The interests of a citizen, as well as the sentiments of a preacher, have led me to speak of the providence of God in our history,—a history as wonderful as it is unique. With the Psalmist, we can say, “He hath not dealt so with any people.” It will be in accordance, I doubt not, with your own religious convictions, to recognize that to him belongs all the glory of our present greatness and prosperity; and that from him must come all the wisdom to guide and the power to advance our well-being and growth in the future. Whatever is noble in the character of our people, or heroic in the annals of our history, is deeply grounded in their constant recognition of a Divine Providence in human affairs, and the immutability of moral law,—the one the object of their daily trust, the other the inspiration and rule of their daily life. May it be yours, ever realizing the presence and blessing of our fathers’ God, to emulate their

spirit, and to reproduce, with added lustre, their character, as you shall aim to preserve, and, as far as in you lies, to give perfection to their work. Bringing to the duties before you, bearing not only on the material, but the moral weal of the State, your ripest wisdom, your purest, most unselfish motive, and your most enlightened patriotism, and in all that may claim your attention, consulting only the mandates of righteousness, and legislating accordingly, you will secure the blessings of a grateful people, as you now have their prayers.

“The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers; let him not leave us nor forsake us.”



